

SPECIAL MEETING NORTH SMITHFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

AUGUST 10, 2011

KENDALL-DEAN SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

7:00 P.M.

The meeting began at 7:00 P.M. with the prayer and the pledge to the flag. Council members present were Ms. Alves, Mrs. Charest, Mr. McGee, Mr. Zwolenski and Mr. Yazbak. Town Administrator Hamilton was on vacation. Town Solicitor Nadeau was also in attendance.

MOTION by Mr. Zwolenski and seconded by Mr. McGee to consider opening the meeting to hear concerns of the residents in attendance.

Mr. Yazbak had not been notified that an open forum would be proposed and thus had told other residents who had called or emailed him that there would be no comment this evening. It looks now like he had misled people. Mr. Yazbak suggested having an open forum for residents to speak at the next meeting.

Mrs. Charest asked for a little indulgence from the audience to enable herself and other Council members to get the background of the litigation from executive session as it was to be an educational executive session meeting for the Council members.

Mr. McGee stated he would like to hear from anyone who had something important and fresh to offer but recommended a five-minute time limit on those who wished to speak.

Roll call vote: Ms. Alves – yes; Mrs. Charest – no; Mr. McGee – yes; Mr. Zwolenski – yes; and Mr. Yazbak – no. The motion carried 3 to 2.

OPEN FORUM

Mr. Doug Harris, the Preservationist for Ceremonial Landscapes with the Narragansett Indian Tribal Historic Preservation office explained that his office has been in partnership with the Rhode Island State

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Historic Preservation office in a battlefield mapping project funded by the National Park Service. Mr. Harris stated that the Nipsachuck Swamp area was the ground where two military actions occurred. This is an historic area of national and international significance. He urged the Council members to take seriously their role as stewards of American history and protect these battlegrounds that could possibly bring revenue to the town.

Mr. Paul Soares, Chairman of the Conservation Commission, read from a letter addressed to former Town Planner Michael Phillips from Edward Sanderson, Executive Director, State Historic Preservation Office. Mr. Sanderson states in the letter that the entire 264 acre project area should be considered archaeologically sensitive. Mr. Soares has just learned that funding has been received for a second phase of surveying.

Ms. Maureen Bischoff of 15 Leonard Drive questioned why the developer is putting detention ponds on top of eskers. She believes the development is not to build houses but to mine materials. Ms. Bischoff also wondered why Planning Board and Zoning Board decisions are under consideration of being overturned. If Narragansett Improvement is putting a housing development in that area, why have they not submitted a plan that meets regulations.

Ms. Carol Ayala of 110 Log Road is also concerned with the talk about gravel mining that could affect the quality of groundwater. She added that the Blackstone River Heritage Landscape Study shows Nipsachuck as one of the five areas in North Smithfield to be labeled as a priority heritage landscape specifically because of the Native American association.

Ms. Mally Jones of 19 Indigo Farm Road was another resident concerned about gravel extraction. She believes Narragansett Improvement has other options for extraction which they have not explored.

Mr. Kenneth Murphy of 4 Indigo Farm Road felt that if the plan for Rankin Estates had been a legitimate proposal for a subdivision, most people would probably have no problem with it. However, this proposal appears to be for one reason only, to remove gravel. He asked each Council member to analyze the information carefully before making a decision.

Following the public comments, Mr. Yazbak stated that at the appropriate time he would urge his fellow Council members to make public the information that was available to them and upon which they based their decisions.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Mrs. Charest, seconded by Mr. McGee, and voted unanimously on an aye vote to enter into executive session at 7:43 P.M. pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5(A)(2) Sessions pertaining to collective bargaining or litigation, or work sessions pertaining to collective bargaining or litigation to discuss Narragansett Improvement vs. the Town of North Smithfield (Three RI Superior Court cases) specifically: a.) Narragansett Improvement Company, et als v. Jill Gemma, et als, C.A. PC08-7468, b.) Narragansett Improvement Company, et als v. Vincent Marcantonio, et als, C.A. No. PC08-6504 and c.) Town of North Smithfield v. Narragansett Improvement Company, et als, PC08-3674.

MOTION by Mrs. Charest, seconded by Ms. Alves, and voted unanimously on an aye vote to come out of executive session at 10:10 P.M. and to seal the minutes. No motions were made and no votes were taken.

MOTION by Mr. Zwolenski, seconded by Mr. McGee, and voted unanimously on an aye vote to adjourn at 10:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra A. Todd, Town Clerk